# Ashland
## Public Schools

James Adams
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: (508) 881-0150
jadams@ashland.k12.ma.us
Fax: (508) 881-0161

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Dear Ashland Parents and Caregivers:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released its "Initial Fall Reopening Guidance" on June 25, 2020. Since that time, updated guidance has been released on a regular basis. In brief, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires students and staff to maintain a distance of three to six feet, to wear face-masks, and to organize students by cohorts to minimize the risk of exposure. The guidance, endorsed by medical professionals and rooted in evidence/research, sets the expectation that children need to be back in school this fall while minimizing risk. Due to the varying comfort levels of families, we will be offering two options to start the year: a hybrid model or a fully remote option, called the Ashland Remote Learning Academy. As data and science dictate and if it is safe to do so, we will consider reverting back to full in-person learning when appropriate. Families, students, faculty, and staff should also be prepared to move to a fully remote option if required, and to move between educational models throughout the year.

The State's new guidance, based mainly on studies from outside of the United States, relaxes safety protocols for schools, which is concerning for some. As we plan for our return to school, we are asking that our community continue to follow stay-at-home orders in the event of symptoms or sickness, wear face-masks in public, and honor the social distancing guidelines outlined in the guidance that follows. These safety measures appear to make a difference. We will continue to do our part in providing a safe educational environment, while seeking and following guidance from state officials as we navigate the road ahead.

The complexities associated with the reopening of schools are extensive. The comfort levels of our students, families and staff vary significantly. We have been discussing our fall reopening for months and continue to keep the well-being of our students, both emotionally and physically, at the forefront of our decision making. Most members of the Ashland school community—students, staff, and parents—continue to express their strong desire to return to school in-person this fall. At the same time, we recognize that we may experience a resurgence of the virus, and must prepare for the possibility that learning will be entirely remote at some point this school year. This "2020 Ashland Public Schools Fall Reopening Overview" takes many variables into consideration and provides a comprehensive framework for what a safe return-to-school will look like.

Be well,

Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools

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## I.    Superintendent's Message

Ashland Public Schools has formulated a three-part plan for reopening our schools for both in-person and remote learning opportunities. We understand that flexibility to move between plans is paramount. As of today, August 10, 2020 and until such time we feel we can transition safely back to 100% in-person learning, with or without restriction, or until a fully remote model is required, the Ashland Public Schools will implement a **Hybrid Learning Model**.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has required school districts to outline three plans for the reopening of school:

1. A plan for full in-person instruction with safety requirements
2. A plan for partial in-person instruction coupled with remote instruction (Hybrid learning)
3. A plan for fully remote instruction
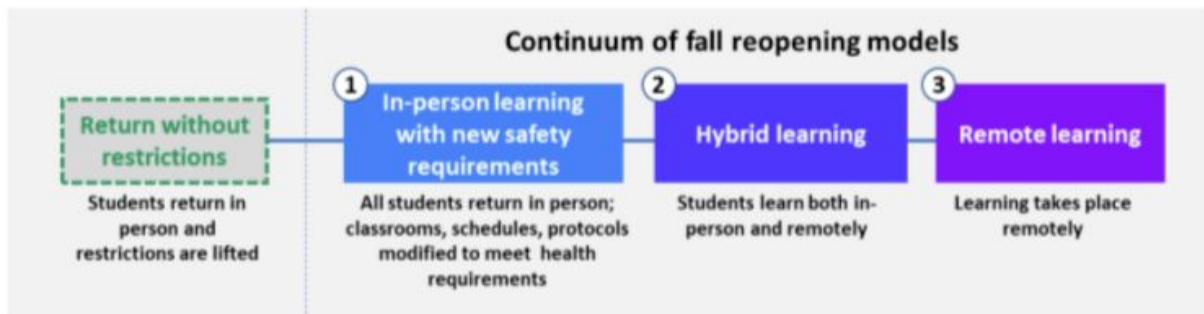


In order to determine the feasibility of conducting school under each scenario, DESE required districts to assess safety, scheduling, instruction and facility requirements for each of the three plans. Preliminary feasibility plans were submitted to DESE on July 31, 2020 and our "2020 Ashland Public Schools Fall Reopening Plan" was approved by the School Committee on August 6, 2020. The process for formulating the plans is detailed below.

To determine the safest possible return for the students and staff of the Ashland Public Schools we examined the various classroom configurations at each of our five schools.  Working with building leadership, teaching staff, custodial and maintenance staff and our school nurses, classrooms were set-up following the suggested organizational patterns recommended by DESE. Four classrooms were staged in each school building as follows:
- 3 feet Distancing of tables/desks in rows
- 3 feet Distancing of desks triangulated
- 6 feet Distancing of tables/desks in rows
- 6 feet Distancing of desks triangulated

- Additionally, each classroom included 6 feet of "Teacher Space" at the front of the classroom.

Classrooms staged at a three-foot distance could accommodate between 24-31 students, dependent upon size and shape of the classroom. At a staged distance of six feet, classrooms could accommodate between 12-18 students, dependent upon size and shape of the classroom.

After classrooms were staged, district level administrators joined building level administrators, nursing staff, association representatives, and members of the School Committee, Select Board, Board of Health and town level administration on a tour. Participants rode buses at both 6 feet of distance and 3 feet of distance. Buildings were toured, using protocols for one-way hallways, physical distancing, facial coverings and hand-washing. Participants visited each classroom to experience the look and feel of the student experience in both the 3 feet and 6 feet staged classrooms.

In addition to our school staging and tour, we conducted several staff, parent, and student surveys to assist in our decision-making process along with hosting numerous webinars for community

| **Surveys were conducted on:** | **Community Based Webinars** |
| --- | --- |
| June 23 | June 2 |
| July 9 | June 3 |
| July 14 | June 4 |
| July 22 | July 16 (2) |
| July 23 | July 19 |
| | July 2 |

Furthermore, our feasibility study showed the necessity to add space to nursing stations at Pittaway, Warren and Mindess schools. As a result, principals at the Pittaway and Warren will work in alternate office space, to provide the required isolation rooms. The Mindess school nursing office was moved to an alternate location, to accommodate the safety requirements.

While all students could physically fit into our schools at a 3 feet distance, school officials, the School Committee, union leadership, nursing staff and facilities staff do not believe we can provide a safe learning environment at this distance. Individual members of the Board of Health, Select Board and Town administration have supported this view. Additionally, busing all students at a 3 feet distance would cause the need for more busing or additional runs that become unmanageable and unaffordable for our district. Further, even if sufficient resources were available to increase busing capacity, school bus companies in Massachusetts, including the company Ashland contracts with, do not have additional school busses to provide. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to keep our students, staff, and community safe, we will initially return students at a distance of 6 feet with safety precautions.

While we do not have the space to accommodate 100% in-person learning using the CDC recommended 6 feet distancing, we do believe we can make significant changes in our school schedules and operating procedures to make a partial return to in-person learning both safe and successful. This approach will require strategies to ensure physical distancing, as well as a series of other critical health and safety measures, including wearing face coverings, washing hands frequently, cleaning and sanitizing facilities, screening regularly for symptoms of illness, and staying home from school when sick, among others.

This document outlines the three plans required by DESE. We prioritize the following guiding principles in the development of this plan:

- **Health, Safety, and Well-being:** The safety of our students, staff and community is our top priority.
- **Equity:** A commitment to ensuring all students experience success through equity and access.
- **High Quality Teaching and Learning:** Provide for excellence in teaching and learning with high quality instruction.

These guiding principles support the implementation and continued evolution of the plan.

Ashland Public Schools has already made numerous investments to prepare for the successful beginning of the school year, and for all possible return to school scenarios.

- **Student desks** have been ordered for classrooms that currently have tables.
- The district budget ensured **continued staffing levels**.
- **Every student in grades K-12 will be provided a Chromebook** to ensure equity of access and support implementation of a one-to-one learning environment (one machine for every individual student.) In addition, the district has purchased hot spots for families with limited internet access.

- School nursing and counseling staff will be increased to meet the needs of our students and families.
- The district has procured **safety supplies** including masks for students who lose or forget them. Additionally, supplies of clear masks, face shields, gowns, gloves, cleaning supplies, and hand sanitizer for each classroom and high traffic areas have been ordered.
- All sinks have been equipped with soap and paper towels. **Plexiglass barriers for the front office staff** were added.
- The district has also committed to **increasing technology access**. All teachers will receive a laptop computer that will allow them to work remotely.

## Phases of Implementation

Until such time that we can transition safely back to 100% in-person learning, the Ashland Public Schools will implement a **[Hybrid Learning Model](#)** for K-12 students. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of various models of learning, it became clear that the Hybrid Learning Model described in this document best meets the needs of the Ashland school community at least for the beginning of the school year.  Families of K-12 students will be asked to select from the following options:

- 2 days in school and 3 days out of school (See Sample Schedules)
- Ashland Remote Learning Academy

# All families must notify the District of their choice for each of their children attending APS no later than August 14.

In the first option, students alternate between in-person 2 days and virtual instruction 3 days. Please see the detailed description in this document for the Hybrid Learning Model. Alternatively, students may opt to participate in the Remote Learning Academy.

**Students and families should plan to remain in their selected model for the first half of the school year (or until such time that we implement 100% in-person learning)**.  Note that in either scenario, students who have an IEP or a 504 plan will receive their required services.  All ELL students will also receive required services.  These services will take place either remotely or in-person, depending on individual circumstances.

*The Ashland Integrated Preschool plans to reopen with IN-PERSON instruction with some modifications, outlined later in this document.*

The following outlines the implementation of the Hybrid Learning Model this fall.

- **August 27-September 11 - Professional Development and Training**.  This time will allow all staff to effectively plan for the implementation of our APS Hybrid Learning Model described later in this document.

- **September 14: Implementation of the Hybrid Schedule Begins and Remote Learning Academy.**  Students in the Hybrid Model will either attend school in person or start remote, virtual instruction dependent on their assigned cohort schedule. Students in the Remote Learning Academy will start remote, virtual instruction.

- **TBD: Full In-Person/Remote Learning.**  We will return back to in-person instruction with increased health and safety measures in place or transition to full remote learning for all. Both scenarios are dependent on our local context.

*The Ashland Public Schools reserves the right to modify and adjust this plan and all attached schedules as necessary based on local and state data, and additional guidance from DESE.*

# ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021 CALENDAR

**25 & 26 New Teacher Orientation**
**27-31 ALL STAFF Meetings – Professioal Days-No Classes**

### AUGUST '20

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 |  |  |  |  |  |

### SEPTEMBER '20

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |  |  |  |

1-3 Professional Days-No Classes
4 Labor Day Recess No School
7 Labor Day No School
8-11 Professioal Days-No Classes
14 First Day of School Gr 1-12
14 Kindergarten & Preschool Start
16 Professional Day – NO Classes
19 Rosh Hashanah
28 Yom Kippur

**12 Columbus Day No School**
**27 (PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch-Remote conferences only**
**28(PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch-Remote Conferences Only**
**29 (PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch-Remote Conferences Only**

### OCTOBER '20

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
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| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

### NOVEMBER '20

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| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 |  |  |  |  |  |

3 Professional Day – No Classes
11 Veterans Day No School
14 Diwali
25 Early Dismissal Day Before Lunch
26 - 27 Thanksgiving Recess No School

**23 (PreK-12) Early Release Day After Lunch**

**24 -31 Winter Vacation No School**

### DECEMBER '20

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |  |  |

### JANUARY '21

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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1 New Years Day Observed No School
15 Professional Day – No Classes
18 M.L. King Jr. Day No School

**15 – 19 February Vacation No School**

### FEBRUARY '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### MARCH '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |  |  |  |

10 (PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch
17 (PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch
19 (PreK-12) Early Release After lunch
24 (PreK-5) Early Release Before Lunch

**2 Good Friday**
**19 - 23 Spring Break No School**

### APRIL '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |  |

### MAY '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 |  |  |  |  |  |

14 (PreK-12) Early Release After lunch
31 Memorial Day No School

**6 Graduation AHS**
**16 Tentative Last Day Early Dismissal Before lunch**

### JUNE '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 27 | 29 | 30 |  |  |  |

### JULY '21

| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

5 Independence Day Celebrated No School

Approved by School Committee July 29, 2020

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**II.** **The Reopening of the Ashland Public Schools**

A. When does school begin?

On July 29, 2020, the Ashland School Committee adopted a new calendar to coincide with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's agreement with statewide teachers' unions to allow for ten (10) professional days before resuming school. This time is necessary to ensure all staff are prepared to deliver robust and challenging remote instruction any time students are not physically in their school building. Thus, the first day of classes for the Ashland Public Schools PK-12 will be on Monday, September 14, with staff returning to work on Thursday, August 27.

We will update the district calendar as needed and in accordance with DESE guidance. Changes to the calendar are subject to School Committee approval. The Superintendent of Schools will email parents and families any information regarding changes to the academic calendar.

In order to meet DESE's transportation guidance which includes reduced bus capacities and increased cleaning requirements, while providing safe and healthy travel, the following changes have been made to our school start and end times. The following start and end times are only in effect for the 2020-2021 school year:

| | |
|---|---|
| David Mindess School | 7:30-1:55 |
| Ashland Middle School | 8:00-2:25 |
| Ashland High School | 8:30-2:55 |
| Henry Warren School | 9:00-3:25 |
| Pittaway Integrated Preschool* | 8:30-2:55 |

*Start and end times vary based on age and specific program.*

Students will follow the schedule on page 7, titled: Hybrid Learning Schedule, which outlines who should report to school. Should students or families have questions, please contact your building principal.

Learning Options for 2020-2021

The Ashland Public Schools will start the 2020-2021 school year in a hybrid model for K-12 students. This model brings half of the students back into the classrooms two days a week, and the other half of students in on two other days. However, it is plausible that APS will experience four distinct learning environments in the 2020-2021 school year. The models include:

1. Full In-Person
2. Hybrid – Combination of in-person and remote
3. Full Remote

4. [APS Remote Learning Academy;](#) Families who are only interested in a full remote experience must submit a completed Remote Only Intent form no later than Friday, August 14. **Families who choose this option will commit to using the Remote Learning Academy platform through January 29, 2021, which is the last day of the first half of the school year**.

**The Ashland Integrated Preschool (Pittaway) plans to reopen with IN-PERSON instruction with some modifications. [Pittaway Plans](#)**

**Guidelines to Return to Full In-Person Learning**

In order for students to participate in full in-person learning certain metrics are being developed by the State of Massachusetts and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We expect these metrics to be available in the coming weeks. When available, the Ashland Public Schools will consider how to safely implement procedures and protocols in order to successfully open schools for full in-person learning.

Areas of concern however that will still be present include but are not limited to: transporting students in a physically distant environment, contact tracing and COVID-19 testing, allowing appropriate physical distance space in each classroom, keeping buildings properly disinfected and sanitized throughout the day, and providing adequate space for nutrition services.

The Ashland Public Schools will utilize a 2-in, 3-out Hybrid model for students in K-12 when all students are not participating in full in-person learning or full remote learning.

**Hybrid Learning Schedule**

|  | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cohort A** | IN-PERSON | IN-PERSON | REMOTE | REMOTE | REMOTE |
| **Cohort B** | REMOTE | REMOTE | REMOTE | IN-PERSON | IN-PERSON |

Cohorts will be created using the first letter of students' last names, as such:

**Cohort A: A-K**, will attend *in-person* school on Monday and Tuesday. Cohort A will participate in remote instruction on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday when students are allowed to be physically in school..

**Cohort B: L-Z**, will attend *in-person* instruction on Thursday and Friday. Cohort B will participate in *remote* instruction on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday when students are allowed to be physically in school.

**\*\*Students from the same family will be grouped in the same cohort.**

Each Wednesday, our schools will close, in order for our custodial team to perform a very thorough cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting process in our buildings. All students will participate in remote instruction on Wednesdays. Faculty and staff will use this time to plan and align activities to ensure the needs of all students are being met, whether remotely or in-person.

It is our expectation that students will participate in all synchronous (live but remote) learning opportunities offered and complete all asynchronous (independent remote) lessons during remote days. We will monitor attendance and follow attendance protocols, similar to that of live, in-person instruction. If a student is absent from a synchronous activity, either a Morning Meeting or academic lesson, a member of the APS staff will contact the parents/guardians of the student. Parent partnership is critical to the success of both in-person education and remote learning. Parents/guardians are asked to contact their child's teacher if their child will be absent from learning activities.

Teachers will provide students and families with regular feedback, regarding student progress. As is the case with traditional, in-person education, every assignment will be given a traditional grade. Students will be assessed informally and formally and teachers will communicate with students and parents regarding assessments and graded assignments. Students will be graded on their progress towards, and

mastery of, learning standards.  Students in grades K-5 will receive the typical standards-based report card.

> **Students and families at all levels should anticipate a vastly superior remote experience to what we provided at the end of the 2019-20 school year.  Students and families should also anticipate that student accountability will be consistent with our pre-COVID-19 expectations.**

In-person instruction (synchronously) for students in K-5 will focus on math and literacy skills. During remote instruction in the hybrid model, students will receive additional lessons in ELA and math asynchronously, while science and social studies instruction will be provided synchronously. The Ashland Public Schools will utilize the Google platform as our main platform for conducting remote learning, including Google Classroom and Google Meets.  However, individual teachers and grade levels may supplement Google with other online platforms to enhance the student experience. Additionally, the Ashland Public Schools will provide every child in grades K-12 with a Chromebook to ensure equity of access, as well as a wireless hotspot for families without sufficient internet capabilities.

To review sample hybrid schedules, click on the school below:

      A. [Warren Schedule](#)
      B. [Mindess Schedule](#)
      C. [Middle School Schedule](#)
      D. [High School Schedule](#)

Transitioning between the Hybrid Learning Model and the Full Remote Learning Model will not impact the class roster or schedules of students participating in the Remote Learning Academy.

**D. Ashland Public Schools Remote Learning Academy and Plan for 100% Remote Learning**

This portion of our plan outlines the expectations for remote learning as guided by DESE's Remote Learning Guidelines. The plan includes the design of the Ashland Public Schools' Remote Learning Academy, which will serve families and students who have indicated they want remote education only.

The second scenario presented, outlines how we will transition into a 100% Remote Learning environment for ALL students, should the need present itself. This includes moving from a full in-person environment or a hybrid environment to a fully remote environment.  Much of the structure is the same.

**[Ashland Public Schools Remote Learning Academy](#)**

The Ashland Public Schools Remote Learning Academy (RLA) is a choice program which is an entirely remote, K-12 virtual learning option available to students and families for the 2020-2021 school year. The Remote Learning Academy is designed to respond to the needs of those students, families, and staff who are immunocompromised or have chosen to keep their child(ren) home during COVID-19. The

expectation is that **parents, guardians, and caregivers** who choose this model for their child(ren) will be actively involved in the education process and will support APS in delivering the most robust and successful learning experience possible. There is no Remote Learning Academy option for Pre School students.

Please register here for the Remote Learning Academy **no later than August 14th.**

The Ashland Public Schools will utilize the Google platform as our main platform for conducting remote learning, including Google Classroom and Google Meets. However, individual teachers and grade levels may supplement Google with other online platforms to enhance the student experience. Additionally, the Ashland Public Schools will provide every child with a Chromebook to ensure equity of access.

**APS Remote Learning Academy for Grades K-5**

The RLA for Grades K-5 is designed to provide students, who will be grouped by grade level, with a rigorous remote experience, with numerous opportunities for students to connect with teachers synchronously. Students in the APS Remote Learning Academy for Grades K-5 will be taught by Ashland Public School educators and will not be part of the APS Hybrid model. Lessons will be aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and follow the guidance on Remote Learning from DESE's guidance of July 24, 2020. **All students will be held accountable for attendance, assignments, and will be assessed using the same standards applied to those students participating as in-person students or hybrid students.**

Due to the nature of completely remote instruction, teaching will look vastly different than the traditional in-person or even the hybrid model. With that said, the RLA will engage and challenge students and will provide participants with an appropriately rigorous educational experience. As the social-emotional health and well-being of all students is paramount to success, the RLA will prioritize relationship building between teachers and students. The sample learning schedules below outline what a typical day may look like for a student participating in the Remote Learning Academy and are subject to change as more details become available and the planning process progresses.

Warren School Remote Learning Academy Schedule

Mindess School Remote Learning Academy Schedule

## APS Remote Learning for Grades 6-12

Ashland Middle School and Ashland High School offer a variety of courses and course levels, making an APS Remote Learning Academy similar to K-5 not as effective. For example, a student at AHS takes seven classes and could have levels ranging from College Prep to Advanced Placement. We do not have the physical staff to provide for the limited number of students that have chosen the Remote Learning Academy for Grades 6-12. Thus, Ashland Public Schools will utilize outside platforms, including Virtual High School, Edgenuity, or Educere to deliver the remote learning experience. Each student will have the ability to plan a personalized learning experience that will meet the rigor of the Ashland Public Schools and the requirements under the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Additionally, DESE is in the process of contracting with a learning platform that may also provide options for our students.

The majority of these classes are asynchronous in approach; therefore, the Ashland Public Schools will assign a teacher to check-in every day with students for attendance taking purposes, monitor workflow, verify completed assignments and address the social-emotional concerns of students and families.

**Students who opt for 100% remote learning at the Middle and Secondary School Level (Grades 6-12) will not be taught by Ashland Public School Educators.**

**Special Education and English Language Learners using the Remote Learning Academy**

Students on individualized educational plans (IEPs) are entitled to special education services as identified on their IEPs. Some platforms will provide special education support, while other virtual platforms do not. The Ashland Public Schools will work individually with each family and student who chooses the Remote Learning Academy to outline service delivery for their child's needs. These remote supports include, and are not limited to, Google Meet, video modeling and phone or Google Chat consultation, and the possibility of in-home services should a parent wish to inquire about this option.

Students who are identified as English Language Learners (ELL) are entitled to support for English language acquisition. Again, the District will work with those families whose children are identified as English Language Learners to customize a plan to support the student's English language skill acquisition. Such plans could include direct online tutoring, video modeling and consultation, and access to digital resources, which teach the English language.

**Social-Emotional Supports and the Remote Learning Academy**

Students who participate in the Remote Learning Academy will have access to all social-emotional supports that are available to students who participate in our in-person or hybrid model. Regardless of instructional methodology, whether remote or in-person, "in order for our students to engage and learn, we need to create environments that promote a positive sense of well-being and healthy connections between peers and with adults" (CASEL SEL Roadmap, 2020).

Students who participate in the K-5 Remote Learning Academy will continue to participate in the Responsive Classroom approach in order to build a sense of belonging and safety within their remote learning community. Students who choose to participate in the 6-12 Remote Learning Academy will communicate daily with an assigned staff member, who will communicate with the school's counseling team regarding social-emotional concerns. School counselors are available to support the social-emotional well-being of students learning remotely just as they are available to support students in school. Lessons provided by school counselors to all students attending school in-person will be provided asynchronously to students learning remotely.  Remote Learning Academy students who require individual or small group school counseling support of any kind will have the opportunity to participate in such activities remotely.

The Ashland Public School District will continue to make referrals to local mental health agencies to support students and families who require additional social-emotional interventions in addition to those we are able to provide remotely.

**Resources for Families**
APS Counseling Department Contact Information
Mental Health Support Local Resource List
Ashland SEL Family Website

**Grading and the Remote Learning Academy**

It is our expectation that students in the Remote Learning Academy will participate in all synchronous learning opportunities each day.  Our staff will take daily attendance and follow attendance protocols as they will for students electing the hybrid model. If a student is absent from the Morning Meeting or a synchronous academic activity, a member of the APS staff will contact the parents/guardians of the student. Parent partnership is critical to the success of both in-person education and remote learning. Similar to hybrid expectations, parents/guardians are asked to contact their RLA administrator if their child will be absent from learning activities.

RLA teachers will provide students and families with regular feedback, regarding student progress. As is the case with traditional, in-person education and the hybrid model, every assignment will be given a traditional grade. Students will be assessed informally and formally and teachers will communicate with students and parents regarding assessments and graded assignments. Students in the Remote Learning Academy will be graded on their progress towards, and mastery of, learning standards.  Students in grades K-5 will receive the same semester-end, standards-based report card as their peers in the hybrid model.

**Ashland Public Schools Remote Learning (100% Remote)**

Should the District need to move from Hybrid to 100% Remote Learning, the following schedules will be utilized:
Warren Remote Schedule
Mindess Remote Schedule
Middle School Remote Schedule
High School Remote Schedule

**The 100% Remote Learning phase is NOT part of the Remote Learning Academy**

Processes and procedures regarding attendance and grading will follow those associated with the hybrid model.

**E. Pittaway Preschool Integrated Schedule**

**F. Professional Learning**

As we open our schools for teachers and staff, during this unprecedented time, professional learning has never before been more essential for success. Due to the allowance of ten additional professional development days at the beginning of our school year, we will institute a phased approach to allow our faculty and staff to feel safe, comfortable, and prepared to take on the challenges of the 2020/2021 school year. It is pivotal that we improve teacher efficacy in regards to remote instruction, as positive teacher efficacy provides teachers with the confidence to impart difficult concepts to students, and to attempt and apply various instructional strategies (McKeown et al., 2016). It is inherent upon us to provide meaningful professional development, as teachers are more apt to employ the learned practices in their

teaching. Meaningful professional development commonly consists of three important elements: active participation, collaboration, and relation to practice. The professional development experience is more likely to influence the teacher's efficacy if the experience is relevant and involves direct participation or collaboration. Therefore, our professional development will consist of a combination of approaches that include time for teachers to learn from outside professionals, participate in online modules directly related to remote instruction, collaborate with one another, and listen and learn from in-house experts.

The following list outlines professional development we have identified as necessary to begin the 2020/2021 school year. The majority of our professional development will take place in a remote setting. In addition, we will cover all typical mandatory training using online modules.

- Health and Safety- to be presented through online modules prepared by our nursing staff
    - Health education about COVID-19
    - Masks: proper use and care
    - PPE: proper use and care
    - Hand Hygiene
    - Identification of and protocols with sick students and staff

- Cleaning and Facilities Management- to be presented through online modules prepared by our facilities staff
    - Cleaning procedures and protocols (who, what, when, where, how often)
    - Cleaning products (what can we use?)

- Building Protocols: - to be presented by building based administration through synchronous meetings
    - Processes and procedural changes including but not limited to:
        - Arrival/Dismissal
        - Physical Distancing Expectations
        - Mask Breaks
        - Lunch, Recess, Transitions
        - Scheduling and Expectations
        - Behavior Management
        - Hybrid Learning Expectations (distancing, cleaning, movement)

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment- to be presented through a variety of resources
    - Effective teaching, assessment, and feedback measures for remote and hybrid teaching
    - Utilizing tools for teaching and communication effectively
        - Google Classroom (G-Suite for Education)
        - Flipped Classroom/Blended Learning
        - Resources and Tools for effective instruction at each level
        - Digital Curriculum Platforms for the varied learner and grade level

- Cooperative Planning and Collaboration- teachers collaborating with teachers
    - Planning time to collaborate with grade level/course teachers
    - Development of templates for communication and consistency

- Social-Emotional Learning-to be presented through online modules by our Director of Counseling and Social-Emotional Learning
  - o Trauma Informed Practices
  - o Covid and the impact it has had on our student population
  - o How to incorporate Responsive Classroom principles in a virtual setting

- Equity and Social Justice- to be presented through a collaboration with outside experts
  - o Creating a District Vision for Anti-Racist Education and Practices (November, 2020)

### III.  APS Building Based Processes and Procedures

The Ashland Public School District is committed to providing students and staff with an environment that focuses on the health, safety, and well-being of all. As a district we have put several processes and procedures in place to ensure staff and students remain safe. We understand the complexities and varied needs of the different students in our building.  Therefore, each building will follow developmentally appropriate, unique processes and procedures. The links below will lead you to specific building-based plans.

As we work to ensure the safety of all students and staff, students will no longer congregate in communal areas prior to the start of school. Upon entry to schools, students will be immediately directed to class, unless they are in need of breakfast. We will continue to serve breakfast at school for students.  Buses will unload students five minutes prior to the start of the school day. Students arriving by parent drop off may not enter the building until authorized by school personnel. If a parent arrives with their child prior to drop off time, the child must remain in the vehicle until authorized by school personnel.

**Students will have assigned seats in every class and on the bus. This is essential in order to provide accurate notification in the event of an exposure.** Desks and/or tables for classwork will be spaced at least six feet apart. All desks will face in the same direction. Spaces such as the gymnasium, cafeteria, and library may be repurposed in order to maximize physical distance between desks.

Additional information that is pertinent to specific buildings can be accessed using the links below:

Pittaway School
Warren School
Mindess School
Ashland Middle School
Ashland High School

## IV.  Students and Family Supports

### A.  Special Education

The District is committed to providing face-to-face instruction for our most vulnerable students. Therefore, students with moderate or high needs will be offered daily in-person instruction on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays when the district is using the hybrid schedule.  The criterion for determination of moderate needs is 6-14 hours of services per cycle (week) delivered by special education staff, while for high needs the criterion is 15 or more hours of services per cycle (week) delivered by special education staff.  We will attempt to minimize the mixing of cohorts by having students in specialized programs remain with their cohort, which limits their inclusion opportunities. Creatively, we will look to provide remote access to grade level peers. Students whose service delivery grid identifies them as low level of need (less than 6 hours of special education services per cycle) will be assigned to an alternating Hybrid Learning Model cohort according to the first letter of the student's last name. These students will participate in both the 2 days of in person and 3 days of remote instruction with their peer cohorts. Each student, regardless of program or need designation, will receive their identified IEP services, although we will work with each family to outline how the services will be delivered. For example, some services might be remote and/or the frequency and durations might look different (2x30 becomes 1x60 for example).

All students with an IEP are free to choose either the Hybrid Learning Model or the Remote Learning Academy at family and guardian discretion.

### B.  English Language Supports

The district also believes that students who are learning English have a greater challenge learning remotely. Therefore, students who scored below a three on the total ACCESS score will be offered daily in-person instruction on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays when the district is using the hybrid schedule .  Kindergarten students will be screened and begin the year in the Hybrid Learning Model with their peers, alternating on the 2 day in-person/3-day remote schedule.

Beginning in mid-October, we will assess these students again using the MODEL and if their score indicates concern, they will be invited to participate in daily face to face instruction for the days the building is open. All English language learners are free to choose either the Hybrid Learning Model or the Remote Learning Academy at family and guardian discretion.

C. **Homeless and Students in Foster Care**

Students experiencing homelessness and those in congregate or foster care will be offered daily in-person instruction on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays when the district is using the hybrid schedule or full in-person schedule.

For all three of the identified groups outlined above, parents will have the ability to opt out of participation in a full in-person program when the District is hybrid. As is true of all students, parents may also elect to have their child educated remotely through the Remote Learning Academy during the pandemic. **Parents opting out of the in-person model when the District is operating in a hybrid model must notify the District of their decision no later than August 14th, with the expectation that the family may not be able to change this election until January 29, 2021.**

D. **Social-Emotional Learning Supports**

The social and emotional well-being of both our staff and students is at the forefront of our planning for the fall as we know that "in order for our students to engage and learn, we need to create environments that promote a positive sense of well-being and healthy connections between peers and with adults" (CASEL SEL Roadmap, 2020). In addition to the universal social-emotional support that will continue to be provided to all students, each school is planning how best to determine which students and families require immediate support and how to identify students who require support throughout the school year. In order to provide a successful school year for all students and staff it is essential for our district to "focus first on secure relationships and emotional safety" (CASEL SEL Roadmap, 2020) which will then allow our students to more successfully engage in academic learning.

**Building Relationships**

All educators will continue to develop supportive relationships with students and their families during the first 6 weeks of school. At the K-5 level, educators will utilize the Responsive Classroom model to build a safe, supportive classroom community which will include direct teaching of the new school expectations of physical distancing and mask wearing in a positive and developmentally appropriate manner. Educators in the middle and high school settings will work to foster a sense of community in their classrooms and provide dedicated time and space to allow students to process feelings so that they are better able to transition from a global crisis back into a school setting. In order to allow all students to feel safe in the school setting, the new school expectations of physical distancing and mask wearing will be directly taught in a positive and developmentally appropriate manner.

**Resources for Educators**
Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID-19 Crisis
COVID-19 Check-In Survey for Educators (Harvard)

**Staff Professional Development**

The district will provide ongoing professional development opportunities to all staff in the areas of trauma-informed practices and anti-racist education.  According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, a trauma-informed approach is key to helping school communities feel safe and supported during times such as this and it is essential to ensure that our educators are able to recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on our students, caregivers, and all staff.  This approach helps to make it possible for students to learn, educators to teach, and staff and administrators to connect and provide needed structure.

**Resources**

Helping Students Heal from Trauma: Rennie Center

While the Covid-19 pandemic has brought forward many challenges to our educational system, the need for professional development regarding social justice and anti-racist educational practices is paramount. Our district leadership team is committed to improving our district-wide practices regarding issues that involve race. We are committed to achieving an anti-racist vision for the Ashland Public Schools. Through a collaboration with educational equity professionals and experts in the area of social justice in educational practices, we will provide opportunities for staff to grow and improve in the area of culturally proficient pedagogy.

**Resources**

Anti-Racist Resources for Educators
Anti-Racist Education Resources for Families

**School Provided Social-Emotional & Mental Health Support**

The district's counseling staff will continue to provide both universal social-emotional support to all students in both hybrid and remote learning settings. Students who require additional social-emotional support which has traditionally been provided in-person during small group and individual sessions will continue to be provided in the format that is deemed appropriate in each building given the safety and health guidelines that need to be followed during the school year.  Counseling staff will be available to support students during school hours whether the student is participating in the hybrid or remote learning model.  Counseling staff will continue to consult with parents, educators, administrators and outside providers in order to best support all students throughout the school year.

**Resources**
APS Counseling Department Contact Information

**SEL & Mental Health Support Outside of School**

The district will continue to make referrals to local mental health agencies to support students and their families who require additional social-emotional interventions in addition to those that we are able to provide in the school setting.
**Resources**
Mental Health Support Local Resource List
Ashland SEL Family Website
Mental Health & Well-Being Website
MassSupport

E. **Nutrition Services**

**Hybrid Meal Service**

As always, breakfast and lunch will be available each school day.  A hungry child cannot learn, and we want to ensure every child is prepared physically and mentally to absorb the lessons of the day.  For students in school buildings, all meals will be served in the cafeteria. We will serve limited options and students must preorder. Payment will be accepted through www.myschoolbucks.com or can be dropped off at the main office of each school.  We will not accept payments in the cafeteria.

In order to ensure students who are learning at home, during hybrid instruction, we will institute the following schedule: Students who are in-school on Mondays and Tuesdays will pick up meals for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday when they leave school on Tuesdays.  Students who are in-school on Thursdays and Fridays will pick up meals for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at the High School on Mondays between 1:30 PM and 2:30 PM.

Any student who participates in the Remote Learning Academy who requires school meals can pick up meals on Mondays and Thursdays.  Those orders must be requested by emailing nutrition@ashland.k12.ma.us the week before.

**100% remote for all students**

Meals can be pre-ordered by emailing nutrition@ashland.k12.ma.us .  Grab and Go pick up will be at the High School on Mondays and Thursdays from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM. Monday's bag will include 3 breakfast and lunches and Thursday's will contain 2 breakfast and lunches.

**V.**     **AMS and AHS Athletic**

As of July 21, 2020, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), the governing body of middle and high school athletics, has voted to push back all Fall sports activities through September 14, 2020.  The MIAA expects to make a final decision whether or not sports will take place for the Fall season and, if so, which sports will be offered.  Until districts have received this guidance, the Ashland Public Schools will not be allowed to start practices.

## VI.   Transportation

The Ashland Public Schools will utilize Example B as recommended in the July 22, 2020 Transportation and Facilities Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Busses will be cleaned using these protocols developed by our bus company, Connolly Bus.



**Am I Safe?**   COVID-19 Vehicle Seating Configurations: LARGE CAPACITY BUS

**VAN POOL**

Safe transportation of students and passengers requires drivers and monitors to:

- Conduct personal pre-trip health screenings prior to every trip;
- Wear face coverings and have gloves available;
- Keep windows open if possible, or turn on ventilation system to high; and
- Clean and disinfect the vehicle after every trip.

Prior to boarding students or passengers in a vehicle, parents, caregivers, or staff must conduct health screenings of students or passengers.

Students and passengers are required to wear face coverings.

Example configurations based on 77 passenger bus.

Additional examples of bus capacities:

|           | 71 PASS | 77 PASS | 83 PASS |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Example A | 12      | 13      | 14      |
| Example B | 24      | 25      | 27      |

**Example A**

**Example B**
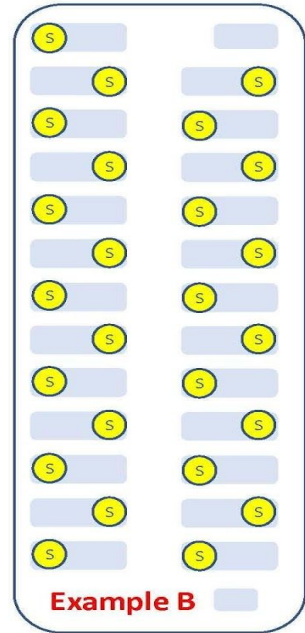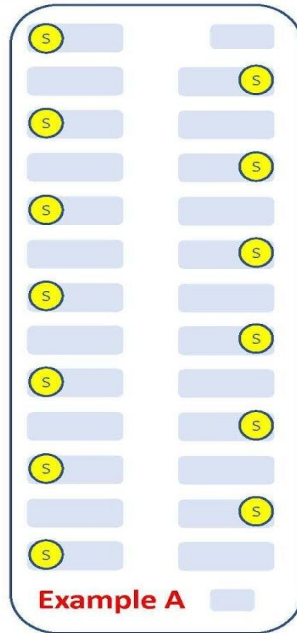
## VII. School Facility Protocols

The Ashland Public Schools will adhere to all guidelines as recommended in the July 22, 2020 Transportation and Facilities Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### Drinking Fountains

Students will be asked to bring their own full water bottle to school each day. Drinking fountains that require contact for use will be closed. Students may use motion activated drinking fountains when filling water bottles if a refill is needed during the school day. Bringing a full water bottle from home will decrease the number of trips from the classroom, and reduce hallway congestion.

### Food and Beverage

Water or like beverages may be consumed where a bottle has the use of a straw to go under the mask or students can safely remove the mask staying 6 feet apart. Water breaks will be encouraged during mask break time in order to reduce frequency of touching mask/face. Food may be consumed during supervised meal times where students are 6 feet apart. In the case where students require sustenance for medical purposes and cannot be 6 feet apart, they should consume their food in the hallway. If needed, the nurse may be called for supervision. When possible, these students should find a space 6 feet apart in the classroom. We advise students to have a healthy breakfast to sustain them for the day.

### Ventilation

The District has taken several steps to increase ventilation and improve air quality in our buildings and classrooms. Our practices reflect recommendations from *Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools*. These recommendations include installing air filters in unit ventilators with an appropriate MERV rating, using air purifiers with HEPA filters, and offering students opportunities to learn and be outdoors when possible. The District will complete a comprehensive inspection, cleaning, disinfecting, and repair of all systems prior to students returning to school. The District has ordered five large tents one for each school to provide outdoor learning and break spaces for students. Teachers will increase outdoor air circulation by opening windows and doors and using fans when possible. Interior doors will remain propped open during the day, to reduce the number of people touching the door and to increase ventilation.

### Student and Staff Storage

Students will not be allowed access to lockers or storage areas until further notice. Storage containers are being purchased in order to store items not needed in the classroom.

### Sinks, Hand-Sanitizing Stations, and Touchless Trash Cans

All schools have multiple sinks for handwashing and hand-sanitizing stations. Every teacher will have a supply of hand sanitizer in their room. All classrooms and common areas have touchless trash cans.

## VIII.    Health Services

### A.  Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) has been purchased as recommended by the Department of Education in their memo of: June 5, 2020.  Recommended PPE Purchases

Additional safety precautions are required for school nurses and any staff supporting high-intensity students in close proximity, when distance is not possible. These precautions include eye protection and a mask/face covering. Precautions may also include gloves and disposable gowns or a washable outer layer of clothing depending on the duration of contact and especially if the individual may come into close contact with bodily fluids.

### B.  Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools, on the Bus, or in the Community Settings

Our first goal is to ensure we create a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, faculty, and staff.  In order to provide this environment, the Ashland Public Schools must have the ability to react to COVID-19 cases as they occur in our schools, buses, or in the community. Below you will find a **Quick Reference Sheet** as to the protocols that will be followed should we encounter COVID-19 cases within our schools, or affecting educators, students, or the community.  The guidance comes from DESE, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).  This guidance is subject to change and will be updated accordingly.

The entire document which includes grade and age level specific protocols can be found here: Protocols for Covid-19 in Schools

**Screening for Symptoms**

It is critical that families and caregivers check their child every morning for symptoms of COVID-19. Checking children every morning at home will serve as the primary screening mechanism for COVID-19 symptoms. Families should use this checklist every day before sending their child to school.

**Ashland Public Schools will continue to use a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher as our fever guideline.**

DESE does not require schools to institute screening procedures at the point of entry and does not recommend temperature checks. Faculty and staff working with students will report to the nurse if they suspect any student exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or other illnesses. Currently, in-school testing for COVID-19 is not recommended. The District strongly encourages families to discuss testing with their health care provider if they have reason to believe their child has COVID-19.

Families play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety that each school must establish. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in their school communities by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

**PLEASE DO NOT RISK THE SPREAD OF COVID-19.  IF YOUR CHILD EXHIBITS A FEVER OF ANY KIND, PLEASE DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD A FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION BEFORE SCHOOL. STUDENTS WITH A FEVER OF MORE THAN 100.0 FAHRENHEIT (37.7 CELSIUS) MUST STAY HOME.**

**Hand Hygiene**

Handwashing removes pathogens from the surface of the hands. While handwashing with soap and water is the best option, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be utilized when handwashing is not available. Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene upon arrival to school, before eating, following bathroom use, after removing a soiled mask and prior to donning a new mask, and before dismissal. When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.

Hand sanitizing is required if handwashing is not feasible. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol content.

**COVID-19 Medical Waiting Room**

Each school has a designated COVID-19 Medical Waiting Room separate from the nurse's office. A student who shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, will be moved to the COVID-19 Medical Waiting Room for isolation until they can be picked up by a family member. Prompt pick-up of students is necessary and expected.

**COVID-19 Testing in Schools**

At this time, in-school testing is not recommended or available. Families should discuss testing with their health care provider. As the accuracy of point-of-care testing develops, this guidance may change. See section below on Response Protocols.

**Vaccines**

Parents must ensure that vaccines are current before children return to school in-person. Health providers strongly recommend all students and staff get their regular flu vaccine. Ensuring all students, teachers, and staff receive the seasonal flu vaccine is an extremely high priority.  This will help control the spread of the seasonal flu, which has symptoms that can be similar to COVID-19.  By minimizing the number of students with the seasonal flu, we can, collectively, minimize the need to respond to potential COVID-19 positive students, which may include the need to send many students home pending the results of a test.

**Response Protocols COVID-19 Exposure and Infection**

On July 17, 2020, DESE issued protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in schools, on the bus, or in community settings. Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days. Most people who test positive and have a relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days. People who test positive can resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

1.  gone for 3 days without a fever (and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol); **and**
2.  experienced improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has gotten much better); **and**
3.  received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local Board of Health or Community Tracing Collaborative).

Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended. Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution.

Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case should be tested. For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:

●  Being within less than 6 feet of COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset, OR
●  Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

In school settings, close contacts include other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the student or staff for at least 10-15 minutes in a classroom, in other school spaces, on the bus, or at an extracurricular activity. In elementary and other school situations where students are in self-contained classrooms for an extended period, all students/staff within this "cohort" are considered close contacts as they may have been within 6 feet of the person with a positive test result. Possible close contacts should not come back to school until they have been tested (or elected instead to self-quarantine for 14 days). If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, self-isolation is for a minimum of 10 days and until at least three days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms as noted. If the test is negative, the student/staff can return to school if asymptomatic and wearing a mask.

**THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO DO IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT IS TO STAY HOME. OUR COLLECTIVE HEALTH RELIES, IN PART, ON INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND RESPONSIBILITY. NOTE THAT SOME SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 ARE THE SAME AS THE FLU OR A BAD COLD; PLEASE DO NOT ASSUME IT IS ANOTHER CONDITION. WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY HOME.**

Please STAY HOME if you have any of the symptoms listed below:
❏ Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
❏ Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
❏ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
❏ New loss of taste or smell
❏ Sore throat
❏ Headache when in combination with other symptoms
❏ Muscle aches or body aches
❏ Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
❏ Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
❏ Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

**If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.**

The MA Department of Public Health provides a list of testing sites and an interactive testing map. These resources are updated regularly. People with symptoms should also contact their primary care physician for further instructions.

While specific protocols vary, there are some common elements for each possible COVID-19 scenario:
✓ Evaluate symptoms
✓ Separate from others
✓ Clean and disinfect spaces visited by the person
✓ Test for COVID-19 and stay at home while awaiting results
✓ If test is positive:
  ● Remain at home at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms
  ● Monitor symptoms
  ● Notify the school and personal close contacts
  ● Answer the call from local Board of Health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative to help identify close contacts to help them prevent transmission

Secure release from contact tracers (local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) for return to school. The quick reference sheet below outlines key actions schools should take when responding to a COVID-19 event.

## Quick reference sheet: Key actions for individual COVID-19 events

| Event | Location of Event | Testing Result | Quarantine |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual is symptomatic** | If an individual is symptomatic <u>at home</u>, they should stay home and get tested.<br><br>If an individual student is symptomatic <u>on the bus or at school</u>, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing. Students will then be met by the nurse and stay in the medical waiting room until they can go home. They should not be sent home on the bus. If an individual staff member is symptomatic at school, they should find coverage for their duties and then go home and get tested. | Individual tests **<u>negative</u>** | Return to school once asymptomatic for 24 hours |
| | | Individual tests **<u>positive</u>** | Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **<u>and</u>** until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. |
| | | Individual **<u>is not tested</u>** | Remain home in self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset |
| | | | |
| **Individual is exposed to COVID-19 positive individual** | If an individual is <u>at home</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.<br><br>If an individual is <u>at school</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked for the remainder of the day (including K-1 students) and adhere to strict physical distancing. At the end of the day, they should go home and should not take the bus home. They should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure. | Individual tests **<u>negative</u>** | Return to school, if asymptomatic or once asymptomatic for 24 hours |
| | | Individual tests **<u>positive</u>** | Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **<u>and</u>** until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. |
| | | Individual **<u>is not tested</u>** | Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from exposure |

**Protocols for School Closure or District Closure**

If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case (students or staff) in the school at one time, or if there is a series of single cases in a short time span, the Superintendent will work with the local Board of Health to determine if it is likely that there is transmission happening in school. For each individual case, the school will follow Protocol for Student or Staff Testing Positive for COVID-19. Note that when there is one isolated case, close contacts will need to stay home and be tested, not the whole school.

When there is suspected in-school transmission, the Superintendent will consult with the local Board of Health as to next steps. These steps may include, making a decision to a) close part of the school or the entire school for a short time (e.g. 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation, or b) close the school partially or fully for the longer duration of a 14-day quarantine period.

In the event of a municipal or regional outbreak, as determined by the local Board of Health or DPH, the Superintendent will consult with the local Board of Health to determine if the district should close.

**Before a final decision is made on a school or district closure, the Superintendent will consult with DESE for further guidance.**

In the event of a school or district-wide closure, the District will check inventory levels of needed supplies and re-order replacement inventory, and ensure that all staff and students are directed to review correct hygiene procedures upon reopening.

**C. Student Mask Use and Parent Information**

All students in grades Pk-12 are expected to wear masks, however individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:
- has trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- in incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:
- during mask breaks or outside
- while eating or drinking;
- during physical education classes;.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students refuse to follow the above procedures, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or if the student should be removed from in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Fask Mask Guidance for Families

## IX.  Technology Support

The Ashland Technology (IT) department played a large part in supporting the remote work and education during the spring closure period introduced by COVID-19. IT provided 398 devices to district and school employees, students, and families. IT also provided equipment for support staff and other personnel which allowed remote support for students' distance learning.

Upon assessment of their role during the initial weeks after the sudden closure, IT staff proactively worked towards making the possibility of a "full distance learning model" a viable option.  In recent years, the Ashland School District has neared a 1:1 device ratio for students. Beginning in March, IT secured more devices, thus bringing the district device-to-student ratio to a baseline 1:1 distribution. Older devices that can still enter service are reserved to be deployed in any instance of issued device problems and/or failure.

IT has also built necessary infrastructure to allow Single-Sign-On (SSO) capabilities, which allow staff and students the ability to better manage, and draw value from existing online learning tools and suites. In addition, IT has provided the district with the opportunity to implement new educational technology tools across specific grades, classes, or the entire District.

The Ashland IT Department (IT) has procured an appropriate supply of new laptops to deploy to educators to ease any transitions related to remote learning for the 2020-2021 school year. The mobility teachers gain for instructional access now far exceeds the previous environment of fixed position, desktop workstations in each classroom. In the same vein as expanding educator access, IT has begun the process of acquiring and activating cellular data, wireless internet devices (i.e. "mobile hotspots") to rectify any discrepancies in access equity for Ashland students, both in-school, and for at home remote learning.

IT staff is working to upgrade our District to Google Suite for Education Enterprise to allow for more contiguous services that exist among Google offerings. Improvements include an upgrade to the functionality of Google Meets, as well as Google Voice. In addition, our educators will have access to Jamboard. These tools and services will give educators an even broader arsenal of resources, thus easing the transition from in-person instruction to a hybrid or completely remote instructional model. Remote teaching requires the need to streamline learning applications. Our upgrade to Google Apps Enterprise for Education will allow for such streamlining to take place. In addition, this upgrade will allow better security, privacy management, and educational workflows for both teachers, administrators, and students. Please use the links below to discover information on some of the tools that will improve our ability to teach and learn remotely.

| | |
|---|---|
| CleverSSO | Google Voice |
| Google EduEnterprise | Jamboard |
| Google Meets | HIPPA and FERPA Compliance |
| Google classroom | |

### X.    Other APS and Student Support

#### A. Extended Day Program (EDP)

We will continue to run our Extended Day Program while students attend school in the hybrid model. At the heart of the Ashland Extended Day Program is the opportunity for students to make meaningful, long-lasting connections with each other. The vast majority of EDP students enter the program in kindergarten and remain with us for seven years, often returning to volunteer and work as high school students. Extended Day becomes a community. To that end, with the start of the 2020 – 2021 school year, the program is striving to provide the opportunity for EDP students to return to a safe and nurturing environment where they can begin to put these pieces of their lives back together. As part of Ashland Public Schools, the students will have a familiarity with the procedures and protocols in place during the day, and we will be able to reinforce these throughout the afternoon. EDP looks forward to welcoming back our EDP family in a way that is as comfortable and reassuring to students and their families as possible.

Please click the Extended Day Program for further information.

#### B. Champions and YMCA

The Ashland Public Schools will still make space available for Champions and YMCA programming following all guidelines as set forth by the Department of Early Education and Care. Please contact these organizations directly with any questions.

### XI.    Example of Hybrid and Remote Learning Schedules

### XII.    Acknowledgements and Frequently Asked Questions

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since March 12, 2020 I have often wondered how we would reimagine schooling. I certainly did not think we would be where we are today, anticipating a hybrid model to start the year, with the real potential of once again offering remote only instruction to our children. However, throughout this process I have been fortunate to enlist many members of our community and school system to question, look at data, and make suggestions that are in the best interest of the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff. While we always run the risk of forgetting those who offered their support, I would like to acknowledge those I can remember below. Thank you is not merely enough for your continued support and time.

### District-Wide Reopening Task Force

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Melissa Mercon- Smith | EDP | Meghan McGuire | Mindess |
| Paul Vieira | Assistant Superintendent | Adria Bodell | AHS |
| Kelley St. Coeur | AHS Principal | Rachel Kriegsman | Warren |
| Dave DiGirolamo | AMS Principal | Ed Burman | Board of Health |
| Mike Caira | Mindess Principal | David Harrington | Unified Arts |
| Pete Regan | Warren Principal | Audrey LaCroix | Nurse Leader |
| Sara Davidson | Pittaway Principal | Michelle Smith | AMS - AEA |
| Jen Cutler | Director of Counseling & SEL | Erin Paolini | APS Transportation |
| Kathy Silva | Director of Student Services | Lisa Beaudin | Nutrition Services |
| Paul Carpenter | Director of Technology | Anne Cantin | IT |
| Jon Murray | Custodian Supervisor | John Hornung | IT |
| Jillian Gawlik | PreSchool Teacher | John Leacu | IT |
| Shaun Adamec | Community Member | Ryan O'Leary | IT |
| Heidi Kaufman | AHS Site Council | Stephen Marks | Athletics |
| Joanna Sudmyer | District Nurse | Nanci Herson | AMS |
| Pam Sage | Warren Site Council | Alex Keefe | APD Resource Officer |
| Brandi Kinsman | AMS Site Council | Diana Davis | ASHPAC |
| Tessa Piantedosi | Mindess Site Council | Jane Guiney | Special Education |
| Dave Muri | APD Resource Officer | | |

**Pittaway Reopening Task Force**

| Jillian Gawlik | PreSchool Teacher | Nancy Hopkins | Nurse |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tricia Davis | District Physical Therapist/AEA | Kathy Silva | Director of Student Services |
| Kim Brissenden | Education Support Personnel | Leah Suarez | Parent/ PTO |
| Nitya Oza-Jain | Parent Rep | Rosalia Morel | Parent Rep |
| Kimberly Keegan | Parent Rep | Jennifer Gerber | Education Support Personnel |
| Laura McMahon(Vitalini) | Special Education Teacher | Robin Wurzel | School Psychologist |
| Sara Davidson | Director of Ashland Pre-school | | |

**Warren School Reopening Task Force**

| Kate Altman | Assistant Principal | Michelle Van Kleef | Nurse |
|---|---|---|---|
| Julie Baker | Counselor | Phlyis Bhandari | Nurse |
| Laura St. Pierre | EDP | Diana Davis | Parent/ASHPAC |
| Tricia Callahan | ELL | Pam Sage | Parent/Site Council |
| Amy Westerlind | ESP/ABA | Peter Regan | Principal |
| Rachel Kriegsman | Grade 1 Teacher | Sue Mellusi | Reading Teacher |
| Melissa Colleton | Grade 1 Teacher/Union Rep | Katie Lichtenstein | Speech Language |
| Jodi Levy | Grade 2 Teacher | Katie Bent | Special Education Coordinator |
| Chris Russell | Head Custodian | Jenna Mastroianni | Special Education Teacher |
| MaryEllen Shorey | Kindergarten ESP | Cheryl Noel | Unified Arts Teacher |
| Meg Clark | Kindergarten Teacher | | |

**Mindess Reopening Task Force**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Claudia Bennett | Principal | Melissa Mercon-Smith | Director EDP |
| Carolyn Breault | Unified Arts | Kristina Mouton | Nurse |
| Kristin Babinski | ESP/Drop Off-Pick Up | Lindsay Johnston | Grade 5 |
| Karen DiModica | Grade 3 | Bailey Wilkinson | Special Education |
| Polly Crnobrnja | EL | Tessa Piantedosi | Parent |
| Meghan McGuire | Counselor | Lisa Lamphier | Media |
| Jessica Kelly | AEA-Teachers | Joanna Sudmyer | Nurse |
| Rose Deliago | Office Staff | Christian Robinson | AEA- ESP |
| Dessiree Tessicini | Grade 3 | Crystal Paynter | Nutrition Services |
| Kerrie Otipoby | BCBA | Tracey Terrazano | Special Education Parent |

**Ashland Middle School Reopening Task Force**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dave DiGirolamo | Principal | Jeanne Nisbett | Special Education Coordinator |
| Michael Morro | Assistant Principal | MaryLou Destefano | ELL Teacher |
| Kristen Scully | 8th Grade Teacher/AEA | Nanci Herson | 7th Grade Teacher |
| Joshua Sweeney | 6th Grade Teacher | Michelle Smith | Music Teacher/AEA |
| Jennifer Caputo | Special Education Teacher | Rebecca Micucci | Art Teacher |
| Alex Keefe | School SRO | Kristine Kaveney | Parent/ASHPAC |
| Sharon Ames | Speech Language Teacher | Brandi Kinsman | Parent/Site Council |
| Audrey LaCroix | Nurse | Tiffany Tessier | 8th Grade Teacher |
| Joseph Lima | STEM Teacher | Sharon Remsen | Special Education Teacher |
| Caroline Williams | Counselor | | |

**Ashland High School Reopening Task Force**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aleisha Egan | English Teacher | Alison Cox | Wellness Teacher |
| Andrew Mackay | Wellness Teacher | Maureen Wiencek | Nurse |
| Antonio Matarese | Education Support Personnel | Brenda Iannarilli | Nutrition Services |
| Brian Cote | Dean of Students | Chad McGowan | UA Teacher |
| Charles Alberts | Math Teacher/AEA | David Harrington | UA Teacher |
| Erin Lachapelle | Dean of Students | Heidi Kaufman | Parent/Site Council |
| Holly Leblanc | Special Education Teacher | Janet Twomey | History Teacher |
| Jennifer Pavia-Shiels | School Adjustment Counselor | Jennifer Pickett | Student Class of 2023 |
| Jill Fulhan | Parent/ASHPAC | Kaitlin Merson | Student Class of 2021/STUCO President |
| Katherine Eburn | Math Teacher | Kathryn Silva | Director of Student Services |
| Lily Mihnos | Student Class of 2022 | Linda Chaney | Administrative Assistant |
| Marybeth Gallant | Library Teacher | Primah Muwanga | Student, Class of 2022 |
| Sarah Finn | Science Teacher | Stephanie Fitzgerald | World Language Teacher |
| Stephen Marks | Director of Athletics | Tyler Kondrat | Student Class of 2023 |
| Jennifer Benstock | Science Teacher | Adria Bodell | Science Teacher |
| Brittany Smeltekop | Special Education Coordinator | Kelley St. Coeur | Principal |

**Referenced Material and Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

FAQ: Fall Reopening Frequently Asked Questions as of August 3, 2020

Additional Staff Training Days this Fall

Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance, July 22, 2020

Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance, July 22, 2020

Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings, July 17, 2020

Remote Learning Guidance for Fall 2020

Guidance for Courses Requiring Additional Safety Considerations for Fall 2020

Creating Positive Learning Environments: Recommendations and Resources to Support the Social Emotional Well-being of Students, Staff, and Families

Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance (June 25, 2020)

McKeown, T.R., Abrams, L.M., Slattum, P.W., & Kirk, S.V. (2016). Enhancing teacher beliefs through an inquiry-based PD program. *Journal of Education in Science, Environment and Health (JESEH), 2*(1), 85- 97.

**School Districts Who Provided Support and Referenced Materials**

Hadley Public Schools, Hadley, MA

Lexington Public Schools, Lexington, MA

Medway Public Schools, Medway, MA

Fall River Public Schools, Fall River, MA

Medfield Public Schools, Medfield, MA

Vacaville Public Schools, Vacaville, CA

Mendon Upton Public Schools, Mendon, MA